

Hugo (L.G.F.)

# The Dental Limbo.

(A Dream.)

By L. C. F. HUGO, D. D. S.,

Washington, D. C.

---

PUBLISHED BY THE

WASHINGTON CITY DENTAL SOCIETY

IN COMPLIMENT TO THE AUTHOR.

Card

**LIBRARY**  
SURGEON GENERAL'S OFFICE

DEC.-4--1897

596





" 'Mong hazy scenes of changeful wonders weird,  
Entranced I moved about, when—Shades appeared !"



# The Dental Limbo.\*

(A Dream.)

"I had a dream which was not all a dream."—*Byron*.

"Sleep has sights as clear and true  
As any waking eyes can view."—*Shelley*.

MY daily work was done ; relieved of care,  
I sought the comforts of my easy-chair—  
Luxurious rest and lazy thought. My wife  
Sat near, and read about "the future life."  
So edified I was and soothed, that sleep  
With pleasing stealth soon took me in its keep.  
Not long had sweet, oblivious calm held sway,  
Before I was to Dreamland borne away ;  
To that fantastic land, where one delights  
In marvels of one's own Arabian Nights—  
Where sleeper's fertile, fancy-guided brain  
Can Nature's self recast new worlds to gain !

\*Spoken at the Joint Meeting of the Maryland State Dental Association and Washington City Dental Society, April 18th, 1895.





"I sought the comforts of my easy chair."

The reading gave my dream a ready cue  
And shaped my course the future life to view.  
But contrary to what one might suppose  
I, much perplexed, the wrong direction chose  
Instead of up - alas! I went below -  
Where mankind thinks the dentist ought to go.

'Mong hazy scenes of changeful wonders weird,  
Entranced I moved about, when—

Shades appeared !  
With dark, mysterious, awe-inspiring look  
Their swift and silent course my way they took.

Quite loth to meet this incorporeal train,  
I tried to slip away—but tried in vain—  
A grisly phantom barred my path—and said :

“ You dare to use a privilege of the dead—  
“ Yet know these realms to living man denied.  
“ Why came you then ? Speak out and nothing hide ! ”

This sullen, ghostly question struck me dumb.  
Amazed I stood. Ah ! true—why had I come !  
Despite attempts my presence to excuse,  
All service did my balky tongue refuse.

The Shade now touched with pity, gently smiled,  
And shook his head : “ Poor soul ! how dream-beguiled !  
“ We'll let that pass—no matter why you came.  
“ No stranger you're to me—I know your name,  
“ Your calling, standing—all, you need not speak.”  
(A painful blush o'erspread my startled cheek.



One morning Byron *woke* to world-wide fame ;  
Reversely, I *in sleep* had made a name !)

To place me more at ease, the kindly Shade  
Himself the subject of remark here made.

“ At disadvantage I have you, I own ;

“ And ’tis but fair I should myself make known.

“ Behold in me, of Dental Art the Sire !

“ Though damned on earth I have escaped the Fire—

“ Got through by Nasmyth’s Membrane—subtile sheath—

“ More plainly, by the skin, sir, of my teeth !

“ But judged am I, to purgatorial test ;

“ Perhaps in time, I’ll fitly join the blest.

“ Of that enough.—

“ Though wrong your coming *here*—

“ The right, some work of yours may claim, I fear) —

“ Yet, *having* come, you shall be entertained

“ By facts, in Limbus only, to be gained.

“ And, since to curious things your mind ’s inclined

“ I’ll show you what on earth you ne’er can find.”

He pointed to a building close at hand.

“ That place and contents are at your command.





"He pointed to a building close at hand."



" Collected there you'll see the monstrous yield  
" Of what is reaped in Dental Folly's field ;  
" Its range from old Etruscan burial-hill  
" To modern Delavan's diploma-mill."

Into the airy structure then we went—  
The sight a thrill of pleasure through me sent.

The treasures of the great, resplendent hall  
Were shown in cases ranged on floor and wall.

Now winding round, and stopping here and there,  
We viewed the objects rich beyond compare !  
My guide, with insight shrewd and bright remark,  
Explained the things that I thought odd or dark ;  
In truth's fine balance vexed questions weighed ;  
Preceptive, warning observations made.

Not much can I recall of what I heard  
And saw, as most that happened seems quite blurred ;  
A few descriptions in my mind still live,  
And these the Shade's own language best will give.

" This case contains the advertising lures,  
" That guarantee delicious, fragrant cures





" Explained the things that I thought odd or dark.



" For (what to oral beauty are the death)  
 " Discolored teeth, sore gums, repulsive breath ;—  
 " Indeed, they promise to arrest decay,  
 " And bring back gums on teeth dressed décolleté.  
 " These Washes, Pastes and Powders are the wares  
 " That prove such easy, profit-bringing snares.  
 " From this analysis it may be seen,  
 " The sample, has much oil of wintergreen—  
 " (To treat the mouth 'tis well to please the nose) —  
 " Is rich in sugar, soap and tint of rose ;  
 " By hydrochloric acid *strength* is lent,  
 " With its proportion *twenty-five per cent.*\*  
 " If teeth thus treated still refuse to whiten  
 " Then soon, like blessings, they in flight will brighten.†  
 " As now you may Nepenthic Nostrums use,  
 " There's naught in dental work can pain excuse.  
 " How soothed by pain-obtundents patients grow,  
 " Those snap-shot, horror-telling pictures show ;  
 " And these machines—new micro-graphophones,  
 " Will reproduce the patients' inward groans.

\*Prof. Elliott found this quantity in an analysis of a tooth-wash.

† How blessings brighten as they take their flight " Young's Night Thoughts.



" Amalgam for incisors here 's exposed ;  
 " Performance of its promise, too, disclosed.  
 " Just mark the tale these trusting teeth relate,  
 " That tell in mournful tones their inky fate.  
 " And there Cement by Ludwig sold galore,  
 " To you in Washington and Baltimore.  
 " His pleasing stories taken down in gulps,  
 " Gave means for saving teeth and injured pulps.  
 " While Ludwig in his ill got gain delights,  
 " His victims curse their State and District ' rights.'"  
 " An illustrated method here we find,  
 " That shows you how an Abscess that is blind,  
 " Can sometimes—quickly, too—be made to see,  
 " ' Immediate filling ' is the recipe.  
 " The tools and drugs for treating Riggs' Disease—  
 " Its cause systemic, local,—what you please  
 " Are placed beside *results* in practice found—  
 " Not such as papers furnish, I'll be bound.  
 " But they're of greatest value, since they show  
 " How *not* to do some work, you think you know.

\* Ludwig sold territorial rights to use this cement—they cost in Washington 50¢ per subscriber.



" A much filled Upper Molar there 's displayed —  
 " In conscious pride and—abscess-sacs arrayed.  
 " A case of *amputated pulp* you see—  
 " Oh ! hardy faith—oh ! skillful snickersnee !  
 " And here a Crooked Root, that well may teach  
 " How with a drill you can its apex reach.  
 " Just at the bend appears a *tell-tale hole*—  
 " 'The drill stopped short of its intended goal,'  
 " But that," now ventured I, "was accidental."  
 He winked. " Oh ! no—*foramen supplemental* ;  
 " The victim thought for cure to be achieved  
 " *Severe congestion had to be relieved !*  
 " This valued root is not in Limbo shown  
 " Because of badly-punctured side alone :  
 " The Doctor at a meeting told the truth—  
 " *Admitted* how the lady lost her tooth.  
 " How strange, that punctured roots will always come  
 " From *others' hands* ! Are home-made slips kept mum ? )  
 " Observe this Tooth surmounted by a broach.  
 " Not long the piece, but still a sore reproach.



" Though burs and hooks were plied its barbs held fast—  
 " Release with *salt*,\* the Doctor sought at last.  
 " The broach (despite this means which ne'er did fail) —  
 " *Could not be caught with salt spread on its tail.*  
 " As steel and tissues did not well agree,  
 " From grief extraction made the sufferer free."<sup>2</sup>

We now had reached some cases set apart  
 For Orthodontia, and Prosthetic Art.  
 Bad taste and lack of sense, much light here shed—  
 My Mentor serious, thoughtful grew— then said :  
 " The Truth is frequently in Error dressed  
 " And there uncovered lastingly impressed.  
 " This work, around us, done by rigid rule,  
 " A lesson teaches, as no other school :  
 " That, while 'tis well good rules your guide to make,  
 " Your sense you oft show best when rules you break.  
 " In other words, the lesson thus may read :  
 " Too strict observance will to mischief lead.  
 " However good the instrument and plan,  
 " Their work is only equal to the man.

\*This has been recommended to dislodge the broken piece by corrosion. I have tried it!!!



" The balconies much curious matter hold—  
 " As : Theses wise, by callow students bold ;  
 " And learned papers, essays, pamphlets, books—  
 " (Such as on office-shelves are heaped for looks)—  
 " Suppressed inventions—more or less complete ;  
 " Descriptions long of methods obsolete ;  
 " Perfected ' systems,'—sublimated schemes,  
 " (Mere empty, self-applausive mare's-nest dreams,)   
 " Exploded notions ; undigested thought ;  
 " Distorted half-truths—e'er with danger fraught ;  
 " Dogmatic statements ; *ex cathedra* law ;  
 " Sententious nonsense ; aphoristic straw ;  
 " Reports of *soft* and *hard-gold talk* :—the store  
 " So fills the cases they can hold no more !  
     " Securely placed in yonder alcoves deep,  
 " We would-be-scientific wrangles keep.  
 " In these affairs the listener oft can't see  
 " Just what the point of argument may be ;  
 " And why, are into requisition brought—  
 " To hide with longest word the simplest thought)—  
 " SESQUIPEDALIAN LEXICALITIES—  
 " And such like verbal abnormalities ! "



But here I woke. Those words would wake the dead.  
Besides, a book had thumped against my head.  
“ For pity's sake ! ” my wife began to grumble,  
“ What wretched stuff is that I've heard you mumble ! ”

---

The meaning of this dream is surely plain—  
(No latent motive dire does it contain.)  
Mistakes and errors openly confessed,  
May salutary prove, though told in jest ;  
For when we “ see oursels as ithers see us,”  
'Tis said, it will “ frae mony a blunder free us.”





" Besides, a book had thumped against my head."

---

PRESS OF BYRON S. ADAMS.